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AN

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY;

OR,

REVOLUTION

IN

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

IMPOSSIBLE.

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AN

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY,

&c. &c.

AT a time when the impartial dictates of reaſon are beginning to be attended to, in oppoſition to prejudice, bigotry, and caprice: When every ſect, party, and denomination of men are beginning to *think*; and folks are no longer aſhamed of being rational: When the liberty of ſpeaking, writing, and printing our ſentiments, has arrived to ſuch an unreſtricted degree: When the ſpirit of politics has not only inſpired men of every age, rank, and order; but extended it's rage even to the ladies, and the circulating-libraries have given place to the political publications of the day: When "the univerſal paſſion,"—*the love of fame*,—has ſuch ſtrong ſolicitations, and may be gratified on terms ſo very eaſy:—At ſuch a favourable criſis, I, too, am induced to ſally forth from obſcurity, and offer myſelf a candidate for a ſhare of public attention.

I am happy in the conviction that my eſſay will have, at leaſt, originality, and of courſe, novelty to recommend it. Let not my reader imagine I mean to purſue the hacknied paths of any cotemporary politician whatever. No: He may here view one branch of politics at a point from which the *many-ſided* figure has never before been obſerved.

Reſpecting the title of this little production—this, at the preſent juncture, appears to be rather immaterial. When politics is the ſubject, names do not always expreſs the nature of things. A piece of *nonſenſe* has been very well received under the title of "Common Senſe." Another ſimilar production is termed "The Rights of Man," the principles of which have already deſtroyed more of the lives and properties of men—made more widows and orphans, and produced more human butchery in one nation, than all the *other wrongs of man* united could have done in a century, and through all Europe. The moſt audacious *treaſon* is now called *liberty*.—Every rational and ſocial principle, which, from the commencement of time, have actuated, cemented, and endeared ſociety, are now loſt in a monſtrous production of imagination termed *equality! &c. &c.* My aim, however, ſhall be to ſupport the title of my pamphlet; but if any inconſiſtency ſhould be diſcovered between that and the ſubject of it, the more conſiſtent will it be with the modern ſtile of title-pages.—But to come ſeriouſly to the point.

The grand and terminating object which all my cotemporaries appear to have in view is—REVOLUTION. This is the central point to which all their reaſonings tend—and that on both ſides the queſtion. One endeavours to *promote*; another, to *prevent* it. Revolution has been toſſed like a hand-ball between England and France; but the infernal *bomb* having never been permitted to graze on our happy ſhores, has broke and exhauſted its helliſh contents where it originated, and ſcattered death and deſtruction in all their horrors among the unhappy beings who firſt formed it. One writer is ſo infatuated with the charming ſcenes of blood and carnage, ſo finely exhibited in his "*beloved Ame-*" *rica*;" but ſtill more profuſely and nobly in the more recent inſtance of France; that he labours with all his ſoul, and exhauſts all his philoſophical ſophiſtry, in order to extend the tragic exhibition—"the trade of death"—to lands where peace, harmony, and happineſs, have long delighted to dwell, as their favourite, undiſturbed abode: Another, on the oppoſite ſide, not quite ſo ſanguine in his wiſhes, exerts all his reaſon and rhetoric in order to counteract the malignant poiſon. In order to preſerve the lives, properties and peace of his fellow-ſubjects: In order to prevent the *effects* of revolution (inevitably tragical) he endeavours to remove the *cauſe*, by reconciling men to a ſituation, which, though it cannot pretend to that degree of unimproveable perfection, that is not the property of any thing below the ſun; and which reaſon informs us never *can*

be; yet, in points of liberty, protection, and general tranquillity, ſtands unparalleled in any age, or by any nation. But though the eminent author alluded to has done the ſubject the greateſt juſtice; yet experience proves, and candour muſt allow, that he has not gained his point.—His deſign was noble, and the execution equally ſo; but ſtill the *means* were inadequate to the *end*. The fears of the people are not yet removed reſpecting this ſame Revolution, nor is the revolutionary ſpirit abated:—Rather are not both daily increaſing, notwithſtanding all the precautions taken to prevent the rapid progreſſion? Has the propenſity to ſedition ever been ſo general, or predominant, as at this moment? Have the public apprehenſions been hitherto more ſerious, or, apparently, better grounded? And after all the exertions uſed in order to do away thoſe fears, and the cauſes of them; this is yet ſtill to be done.

To attempt what has been hitherto attempted in vain, is my intention; but though the object is the ſame, the means ſhall be very different. My deſign is not to take any notice of what has already been written on this ſubject, or the reſpective authors. I ſhall not pretend either to do again, or undo, what has already been done: My object is ſimply this—to do *more*—to go a little farther—to convince every loyal ſubject that his fears are as groundleſs as he could wiſh them; and diſſipate the miſts of Revolution, by ſhowing it's dreaming votaries the utter futility of their wiſhes and deſigns.—I ſincerely feel

for the feelings of my loyal fellow-ſubjects; and ſtill more ſenſibly for thoſe who come under a ſuperior character; and to whom the preſent trying criſis muſt be peculiarly affecting. In order to remove this evil, I now proceed to prove, that the object of their fears, the event they anticipate, *can* never happen. That REVOLUTION IS DECIDEDLY IMPOSSIBLE.

Ye prejudiced, flimſey, capricious bubbles, who cannot enjoy your porter or your pipe without a mixture of that delicious and ſalutary ingregient—*treaſon:* You enemies of concord and happineſs, lay down this pamphlet—read no farther; it was never intended for your peruſal. I do not wiſh to make a proſelyte of one of you; my cauſe does not require it. I neither fear nor love your perſons, your principles, or deſigns. They are all eternally inadequate to the execution of your infernal wiſhes.

In the kingdom of Ireland, where I have lately ſpent ſome time, and the internal ſtate of which I have ſtudied with the deepeſt attention, there are, at this moment, more than forty thouſand men in one collective body (of which I have the honour to be a member) all the *ſworn* enemies of treaſon, and, of courſe, Revolution:—Brave men, and ready on a day's notice to devote their lives and properties to the ſervice of their country, their king, and conſtitution, among whom are many of the firſt fortune and character in that loyal nation. One man is placed at the head of this formidable body: A Nobleman, to whom the moſt implicit and unanimous

deference is paid. They are divided into about eight hundred ſeparate ſocieties; each under the direction of it's reſpective officers. They all meet periodically—(once a fortnight, or ſo)—and things are ſo happily contrived, that a circular letter can reach every ſociety and individual belonging to it, in two days; and on the third day they are ready armed to ſupport their obligations. They are not the *Volunteers of Ireland* (the generality of whom are included in theſe) but volunteers united on different principles, and for very diſtinct purpoſes. There is ſcarcely an individual among all this number who has not one or more relatives, who, though they do not immediately belong to this body, are yet as ready to join their reſpective friends, as *theſe* are to ſupport the cauſe they have ſo ſolemnly undertaken. Now, if we ſuppoſe all the regiments quartered there added to thoſe; it will exceed any number we can pretend to aſcertain—all ready to maintain with their blood the ſame glorious cauſe.—Such is the ſtate and ſtrength of one *little* kingdom: But, if this is ſo, can Revolution take it's origin there?

Let us now take a view of Great Britain (I beg my reader will ſuſpend his ſurpriſe for a moment—thoſe wonders will by and by be accounted for). In England and Scotland united, we have an hundred thouſand ſuch volunteers.—We have more; but I wiſh to be exceedingly moderate in my calculation, nor indeed is it *mine*. Theſe are united exactly on the ſame principles with thoſe in Ireland: Governed by the ſame form of diſcipline—under the ſame ſolemn

political engagements; and actuated by the ſame ſteady and unanimous reſolution of ſupporting with property and life the ſame excellent cauſe. Each of thoſe alſo have their reſpective friends and relations, equally ready to maintain the ſame principles, and ſhare the ſame fate. To both of which, if we ſuppoſe the regular ſtanding army added, the collective number will be ſuch as muſt excite our admiration. To this number let thoſe of Ireland be joined, and then enquire—from whence can revolution ariſe?

But my reader does not, perhaps, believe a word of all this; (indeed I cannot reaſonably expect he ſhould.)—"'Tis impoſſible" I hear him ſay, "that "any ſuch important matter ſhould be 'till now a "ſecret.—'Tis incredible that among ſuch a vaſt "number as I ſpeak of, *I* ſhould be the firſt to "inform the reſt of the public reſpecting a matter "in which they are ſo highly intereſted." Give me leave to anſwer this, and every other ſuch difficulty, in very few terms. The famous bodies I allude to in Great Britain and Ireland, are—the FREEMASONS of both.—Perhaps the reader's ſurpriſe, with reſpect to the *ſecrecy* of this buſineſs, may now be ſomewhat abated.

I muſt confeſs, I think my much reſpected brethren exceedingly to blame in keeping this important matter ſo long a ſecret from the general public. *This* they certainly ought to publiſh to all the world, with every other uſeful circumſtance belonging to their

Inſtitution, particularly as they are under no ſort of obligation to the contrary. I wiſh to protract this digreſſion by diſburthening my mind of a ſubject which has often and deeply engaged it; and would juſt beg leave to premiſe, that were it not for the urgency of the preſent occaſion, I had probably been much longer ſilent on this head: But at this critical juncture we are called upon in a peculiar manner to be more explicit on the intereſting ſubject. The tranquillity of our king and country demands, at this criſis, the moſt public declarations of our particular engagements to both—of the invincible loyalty of our principles; of our reſolutions, and of our power. Our own conſcious ſecurity may induce us to ſmile in ſecret at the apprehenſions of the public; but certainly much more is required of us. How long, my deareſt friends, will you continue to confine your ideas of an Inſtitution ſo very extended in it's nature and utility to the *ſecret, diſtinguiſhing marks* of it? For God's ſake, or for ſhame's ſake, learn to make this eaſy, and highly neceſſary diſtinction.—Know that thoſe marks, and the thing itſelf, are very different ideas—eſſentially diſtinct in their nature and deſign.—Keep the one as ſecret as you will; but let all the world know what the other is. —I repeat it—there is not—there never was any ſecret in MASONRY (abſtractly conſidered).—Never did any inſtance of infatuation prevail ſo univerſally! —Take a view—an *unprejudiced* view of the whole matter.

A ſociety was formed—(perhaps the moſt ancient of all ſocial Inſtitutions),—the object of which was to ſupply or compenſate for the moral and ſocial deficiences of religion and law, and draw more cloſely the cords of virtuous philanthropy. Their original motto was :—" Do unto your brother as you " wiſh him to do unto you."—Nor have they ſince ſeen any reaſon to change it. They entered into reciprocal engagements, the moſt ſolemn imagination could frame, to perform, with reſpect to each other, all the particular duties implied in the above univerſal injunction, and which their common obligations nominally ſpecified. Theſe duties were by no means intended to be held as ſecrets, any more than the obligations relative to them.—No poſſible reaſon could authoriſe ſuch an idea: But in order to aſſiſt them in diſtinguiſhing the members of this virtuous ſociety from all others, it was indiſpenſably needful that ſuch private *marks* ſhould be fixed on as might direct them unerringly in making this diſtinction.—Without *this* they foreſaw they muſt be liable to numberleſs impoſitions; incapable of knowing a friend and brother, from an enemy and impoſtor; and every day ſubject to take an adder to their boſom, who only waited that opportunity to ſting them to the heart.—Secreſy was a circumſtance quite indiſpenſable in this caſe—as without it no mark can be properly *diſtinguiſhing*. Thoſe, therefore, they engaged to keep inviolably ſecret, with all the ſolemnity which marked every other article of their

extended obligation.—But this was, and is the only ſubject of *ſecreſy* in all a Maſon's engagements. Other parts ſimply relate to the ſpecific duties they are to perform, as well as the evils they muſt avoid with reſpect to each other, and their relatives—and all *this* they may and ought to publiſh in the face of the ſun. But men, conſcious of the ſerious nature of their obligation to keep this *circumſtance* of their inſtitution a ſecret; inadvertently (or ſuperſtitiouſly) determined never to ſpeak a ſentence relative to the inſtitution, it's nature, deſign, or uſefulneſs, at all;—but to be perfectly mute on the whole ſubject, root and branch. As others were added to their number, led, as the world is, by precedent, they alſo reſolved to be as ſilent on the ſubject as their ſenior brethren—they would not pretend to be wiſer, or more explicit in a matter than thoſe whom they naturally ſuppoſed to know more about it; and thus the ſuperſtition encreaſed with their number, till the *name* of the fraternity was ſcarcely to be expreſſed out of the lodge room. This was "lighting a candle to put it under a buſhel," with a witneſs.—A ſtrange way this of improving ſociety;—of encreaſing our own, or extending it's influence! I will venture to affirm, that there is much more ignorance, and perhaps guilt, exhibited in this very prudent ſort of conduct, than of either reaſon or merit.—'Tis not an evil which terminates in itſelf, but extends it's conſequences far and wide. This clearly accounts for all thoſe prejudices every where

entertained againſt us and our invaluable Inſtitution; and is really (though indirectly) the cauſe of all thoſe evils which now ſubſiſt among us; and which we may, but do not remove. For, let the minds of men once be reconciled to the MASONIC Inſtitution, by rectifying their miſtakes, removing their prejudices, and convincing them of it's happy tendency—of that ſecurity and protection it affords to the properties, characters, perſons, and conſequent felicity of themſelves and families—that all which is wanting to conſtitute univerſal harmony naturally and unavoidably flows from it; and the neceſſary conſequence will be, that every man, thus convinced will immediately become a MASON from the dictates of ſelf-preſervation—ſuppoſing him incapable of being actuated by any higher, or more diſintereſted principle. And where the excluſive influence of curioſity has produced ſuch effects, was the moſt powerful law of nature—SELF-INTEREST concerned, we need ſcarcely ſet bounds to our hopes. Already we are by far the moſt numerous and powerful body in theſe kingdoms:—Then Britain and Ireland would be all one body.—But it is time to return to my ſubject.

I was telling my reader who thoſe Bodies are whom I gave a previous account of. Perhaps he is not altogether ſatisfied that they anſwer my deſcription of them: Some demonſtration may therefore be neceſſary.

I aſſerted that we have forty thouſand in Ireland:—there are even more than that number; and as I

have the happineſs of being particularly acquainted with the ſecretary of the GRAND LODGE in that kingdom; ſhould it anſwer any good purpoſe, I could readily procure all their names and places of abode, as a corroborating proof of what I now advance;—beſides, there are thouſands whoſe names are not regiſtered.

I alſo ſaid, that they are all the ſworn enemies of *treaſon*:—that they indeed are to a man. I do not mean by that (comparatively) flimſey thing—*the oath of allegiance*: but by AN IMMUTABLE ENGAGEMENT INSEPARABLE FROM THEIR ORDER. They are moſt ſolemnly bound, not only to oppoſe treaſon, but alſo to expoſe the perſon to criminal juſtice whom they ſhall know to be guilty of any treaſonable intentions; and were it even poſſible for a brother MASON to degenerate to ſuch an extreme, he would be equally expoſed,—excluded from their ſociety; and treated as a murderer:—For *treaſon* and *murder* are equally the objects of their deteſtation and reſentment; and ſhould meet with equal lenity. A member of this order will not ſo much as hear any converſation bordering on this extreme; but in whatever company he may be, diſcourages the firſt appearance of this evil, either by leaving that company, or candidly expreſſing his ſentiments relative to the deteſted ſubject.

I likewiſe aſſerted, that they pay an unreſerved attention to the will, and deference to the judgment, of the Nobleman who is placed at their head. This

they indeed do; not only as far, but much beyond what their particular engagements require. Their love and attachment to the perſonage alluded to, are ſuch as promote an unreſtricted deference to his deſire, even in matters of an indifferent nature—how much more in their common and mutual engagements! The conſequence is, that the Right Honorable Richard, Lord, Baron, Donoughmore—GRAND MASTER OF MASONS in Ireland—would at any time be followed into the field by forty thouſand men, animated by ſuch principles as muſt render their force irreſiſtible to double that number, who, actuated either by guilty motives, or no higher principle than fear, are reluctantly driven forward with trembling hearts to the horrors of battle. Nor need he dread oppoſition: All the great men in that kingdom united could not boaſt of ſuch an extent of power; nor any power at all if not in coincidence with this. Now if we add to this number the reſpective friends of each, (which includes every loyaliſt in the nation, as ſhall ſoon be proved) how formidable muſt be the force of ſuch an army! But ſuch a force is ready every day to cruſh to atoms the firſt appearance of a revolution.

But how ſurpriſingly does the ſubject expand when transferred to Great Britain! Here are more than three times the number of MASONS that are in Ireland —(and ſimilar proofs can be produced)—I need not again mention that ſimilarity of ſentiment, obligation, reſolution, &c. which ſubſiſt between the

MASONIC bodies of Britain and Ireland. It is quite ſufficient to ſay, that the moſt unanimous and undiſtinguiſhable ſpirit actuates the whole; both with regard to allegiance, and every other circumſtance relating to their engagements and diſcipline as MASONS; ſo that every thing advanced reſpecting Ireland, may be truly applied to Britain, without any other difference than the ſuperior extent of the latter. How little do they know of the internal ſtrength, and invincible loyalty of theſe kingdoms, who can ſubject themſelves for a moment to the apprehenſions of a Revolution!—Had France been in a ſimilar ſituation—had the MASONIC ORDER in that nation been proportionably ſtrong, and their engagements equally loyal, Revolution would have met with the ſame oppoſition there, as it will ever do in theſe happy lands—their king would have been ſtill on his throne—barbarity nipped in its bud; nor would rivers of human blood have run in their ſtreets, and left their indelible ſtain on that once happy and beautiful part of the creation!

I ſcruple not to affirm, that were it not for the private exertions of the numerous and loyal ſubjects in queſtion, Great Britain and Ireland would long ere now have copied the example of France. There is not a ſingle family in England, Scotland, or Ireland, in which there is not one or more MASONS, in one or other of it's branches. Theſe induſtriouſly and zealouſly (in their reſpective ſpheres) threw water on the kindling fire—watchfully extinguiſhed

the riſing, ſpreading flames; and thus deprived ſedition of its roots. For this purpoſe they frequently aſſembled in order to "ſtrengthen each other's "hands," and confirm and animate their reſolutions at this important period. Their deliberations were indeed private; and their exertions cool and without buſtle;—but, like a ſalutary medicine, happily applied, operated moſt effectually without external ſymptoms. This was and is that powerful antidote which uniformly reſiſted, and ſtill will continue to reſiſt, until it fairly expels the ſubtle poiſon from thoſe lands which has already diffuſed itſelf over all Europe. The united efficacy of all other precautions would have been found totally inadequate to ſtem the dreadful torrent; which, without this oppoſition from the moſt powerful and faithful body of men the world can boaſt of, muſt have burſt down every barrier, ſcorned every interruption, and carried all before it, in imitation of the very recent and influential precedent of a neighbouring nation.

From the above remarks ſome few inferences naturally preſent themſelves. We may now clearly ſee (unleſs we ſhut our eyes) how very univerſal that influence is which the MASONIC ORDER has over every perſon in theſe kingdoms.—They are reſpectively united by the ties of conſanguinity to every individual in Great Britain and Ireland. (I mean the *natives.*) Two neceſſary conſequences follow: One is—all the loyaliſts will take the field with them at any time, from the double incentive of nature and

allegiance: The ſecond—no man will (even if he dare) oppoſe them, from that inſuperable bar—the principles and feelings of human nature.—Brother will not fight againſt brother—the father and ſon will not oppoſe each other any farther than *ſimple ſentiment*. Even the more remote degrees of conſanguinity will not imbrue their hands in each other's blood, for the ſake of diminiſhing their *taxes* a few ſhillings annually—the only object of revolution.

The eaſy concluſion from theſe incontrovertible premiſes is—were this noble body, or any part of them, to take the field to-morrow, they would immediately be joined by every loyal ſubject of England's king; nor would they be oppoſed by a ſingle man in his dominions: But ſome hundreds of thouſands would oppoſe them to no other purpoſe than that of falling victims to their folly.—So firmly is the throne of our king eſtabliſhed.—So ſure is the foundation of our enviable conſtitution: Yet the moſt convincing argument ſtill remains.

Though the ORDER require no other incentive to *active* loyalty than that already mentioned; namely—the principles and obligations of which it is conſtituted; yet have they a more powerful ſpring of action than even this (though a conſequence of it) and their attachment to his preſent Majeſty united.—I mean their ſacred engagements to the perſon and intereſt of his ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, GRAND MASTER OF MASONS IN ENGLAND; and whom they joyfully regard as their future king. This

is a circumſtance which removes the matter beyond all poſſible controverſy. There is not a FREE MASON in Great Britain and Ireland who would not glory in an opportunity of devoting his life—his ALL to the intereſt of his beloved Prince. The crown of George III. would be preſerved, in oppoſition to the united powers of earth and hell, for George IV. were we actuated by no other principle than our attachment to the latter.

In the courſe of a few years paſt, the advancement of the MASONIC ORDER has been the ſubject of pleaſing wonder to all it's votaries. This remarkable increaſe may date it's commencement from the time when the Prince of Wales was initiated a member of that ſociety. Since that time their number has been more than doubled—and while we reflect with inexpreſſible pleaſure that he has done honour to a noble cauſe: at the ſame time we exult to find that honour reflected with improved luſtre on that illuſtrious character. In this inſtance of his conduct, His Royal Highneſs has exhibited a degree of wiſdom, which, though it may for the preſent eſcape general obſervation, the event of time will clearly diſcover.

Since George I. was placed on the throne of England, the felicity of both ſubject and monarch has advanced with an uninterrupted gradation: And in the looked-for ſucceſſion of the Prince of Wales, we may rationally extend our hopes, and anticipate univerſal happineſs. He and his glorious anceſtors

will reflect dignity on each other's characters;—and while we say—long live King George III. may we not add, consistently with the strictest loyalty—long may the Prince of Wales survive, and fill the throne of his royal father?

And when by the order of nature, and heaven's decree, that great event shall take place, *this* will be found the most brilliant gem in his diadem. The helms of our noble ORDER and of STATE will at once be guided by his royal arm with ease, success and security. Where is the man whom ambition would not stimulate to be united by the most sacred ties to his king? and who cannot see the effects of such an universal attachment? What loyal subject cannot *now* anticipate the blessings that must be consequent on such an unprecedented union of heart and interest? When every happy subject will be fired with the exalted ambition of devoting his life to the honour and tranquillity of his BROTHER and his KING—when the sovereign and subject will be actuated by the same principle—LOVE—and act from the same intention of promoting mutual felicity: what reciprocal harmony must be the consequence!

Ye whom experience has taught that happy similarity of sentiment peculiar to our ORDER—who know that pleasing sympathy of feeling which subsists among the whole, and influences the mind of every member: You can form an idea of that approaching felicity, which those destitute of that experience can neither know nor enjoy.

Ye envious enemies of harmony and love, look before you and tremble. Ye diſaffected—audacious prognoſticators on the acceſſion of your Prince, anticipate your confuſion and diſgrace.—You ſhall ſee the exalted object of your growling predictions fill the throne of his Royal Anceſtors with unprecedented glory—with unexampled power and goodneſs; and cringe beneath his footſtool. Heavens! grant additional fortitude to his noble mind; and enable him to ſoar above every preſent difficulty with the eye of hope fixed on the glory and happineſs that await him!

So far have I endeavoured to ſupport my title-page. I have made a *diſcovery*—let my reader judge of it's *importance*. I flatter myſelf candour will allow that here are *truth and novelty united*—the haggard looks of prejudice and infidelity I deſpiſe.

Upon the whole, I hope and believe what I have advanced will anſwer the end for which it is intended—will convince thoſe who wiſh to be convinced (and they are all in whoſe ſentiments I am any way intereſted) that Revolution, either at this, or any ſubſequent period, is altogether impoſſible in theſe lands—So far then are my wiſhes gratified, and I might here conclude: But as the ſubject I have had occaſion to introduce has long made a deep and ſerious impreſſion on my own mind, and having ſpecified one great inſtance of it's utility; perhaps ſome of my readers who have not known ſo much of it before, or never conſidered it in ſo important a light, may

wiſh to be a little farther inſtructed in the nature and deſign of our Inſtitution—I chearfully proceed to gratify that wiſh; and as I have aimed at all the conciſeneſs which perſpicuity would admit of in what I have already advanced, ſo, here, too, I ſhall take care not to fatigue the attention of my reader by the prolixity of the ſubject.

Maſonry is underſtood in two general ſenſes, and which are commonly diſtinguiſhed by the terms OPERATIVE and FREE. Operative Maſonry ſimply means architecture—the buſineſs of building: Free Maſonry is a moral Inſtitution, calculated to promote the invariable exerciſe of all the ſocial and relative duties; and though no ideas in the world can be more differently diſtinct from each other than thoſe two, yet the line of diſtinction having never been perfectly drawn, and men have been ſo long accuſtomed to confuſe their notions reſpecting them, by jumbling them together, that perhaps there are few words in our language ſo differently underſtood as the term FREE MASONRY.

There are numbers ſo very circumſcribed in their ideas on this head, as to ſuppoſe Freemaſonry to conſiſt entirely in certain ſecrets, which have been rendered famous by being inviolably preſerved in every age and nation to which the Inſtitution has extended. Few, comparatively, have any higher conceptions of the matter than this: Hence it has frequently been objected, "If there be any thing "good in MASONRY, why is it kept a ſecret? Why

"ſhould a perſon engage in any thing he is totally "ignorant of?" From which it may juſtly be inferred, ſuch perſons have no notion of MASONRY beyond the ſecrets they allude to, and ſo no juſt idea of it at all. The *ſecret diſcriminating marks* of it they have always miſtaken for the thing itſelf.—Others, in a farther ſenſe, think and call it *an art*; thus they can neither write or ſpeak on the ſubject without a very frequent repetition of *the art* and *the craft*—terms only applicable to a mechanical calling. But what ſenſible perſon can keep his countenance on hearing them applied to the cardinal virtues? Some few, in a ſenſe ſtill more extended, have very reſpectfully termed Freemaſonry a *ſcience:* We are certainly obliged to ſuch men for their ſuperior opinion of our Inſtitution; but in juſtice to them and the ſubject, we cannot help obſerving, they are juſt as wide of the mark as any of the former.

Can any thing be imagined more ſilly or confuſed than the ideas of thoſe who thus blend the buſineſs of Architecture and the Maſonic Inſtitution together? Yet there is ſcarcely a man in a thouſand who does not run into this abſurdity. Never did ſo inconſiſtent, ſo ridiculous a notion prevail ſo univerſally. Thoſe who have written on the ſubject, and whom we might reaſonably expect in the fulleſt poſſeſſion of it, have, to a man, fallen into this gulf, from which no man ever yet extricated himſelf. How many grave and far-fetched accounts have we been favoured with reſpecting the antiquity, extent, utility,

&c. &c. of—*building?* And all this ſtuff the reſpective authors have ſtiled *Hiſtories of Freemaſonry!* With equal propriety may we beſtow that title on the annals of England or of Rome.

How ſhall we account for this ſtrange abſurdity? Can it poſſibly be the ſimilarity of *name* that has thus led men to jumble together two things as eſſentially different in *nature* as the buſineſs of a taylor and that of a clergyman? How, in the name of wonder, could it enter any man's head to confound the ſimpleſt mechanical calling with a moral inſtitution, formed for promoting the exerciſe of our reſpective duties to each other by the moſt effectual means?

Men hear of hiſtories, &c. of *Freemaſonry*; led by curioſity, or a deſire of information, they procure and read them; but how are they miſled and diſappointed! They expected, from the authors' promiſes, to be inſtructed in the nature and intention of the Inſtitution: Inſtead of this they are told, with all the formality in the world, that the earth was formed by the *rules of Geometry*, and that men have ever ſince been building houſes, &c. on the ſame principles. From the title-pages they hoped to learn of what uſe FREEMASONRY is to the world—they are ſhowed, by the moſt convincing arguments, the ſingular advantages of houſes; they are informed of caſtles, walls, and bulwarks, that were very long ago indeed; but of all things, the inſtances of Noah's ark, the tower of Babylon, and pyramids of Ægypt, are by no means to be omitted, theſe being incon-

teſtable proofs of both the antiquity and utility of —FREEMASONRY!

Thus are men left juſt as wiſe as they were, and find they might as well have read the Arabian Nights Entertainments for information on this ſubject. Many of them are already Operative Maſons, and naturally conclude that the addition of a few ſecrets is only wanting to render them complete FREEMASONS. This is the very thing they want, and ſo much wiſh to know; and this itching curioſity for the great and important ſecret being ſo very predominant in the generality of men, boys, and particularly *girls*, it has encouraged another ſpecies of impoſition, which has greatly ſucceeded among the low, illiterate tribes of mankind.

The inſatiable propenſity of the gaping rabble for FREEMASONS' ſecrets was juſtly ſuppoſed capable of ſwallowing any thing that firſt propoſed itſelf under that title; and with ſuch ſecrets they were ſoon amply ſupplied. 'Tis none of my intention, however, to take any notice of the authors alluded to, or their productions.—Common ſenſe requires no criticiſms of this kind; and ſuch as are capable of being thus impoſed on, are either of too deſpicable a character to deſerve to be undeceived, or of too narrow conceptions to comprehend any ſuch ſubject as FREEMASONRY.

This egregious miſapprehenſion on the one hand, and miſrepreſentation on the other, of perſons who have undertaken to inform the world reſpecting this ſubject, have been productive of more ſerious conſequences than we are apt to imagine. It fully accounts for the general ignorance—blindneſs with regard to this ſerious matter, and the conſequent prejudices ſo univerſally entertained againſt our Inſtitution—prejudices which every man of diſcernment muſt ſee, and every friend to ſociety lament—preju-

dices not only preventing millions of men from enjoying that ſecurity and happineſs inſeparably connected with this eſtabliſhment; but daily involving them in the moſt poignant and inſupportable kind of diſtreſſes, and which an union with us would either haveentirely prevented, or effectually removed.

And ſurely the cauſe muſt be taken away ere the effect will ceaſe. The judgments of men muſt be rectified—the clouds of ignorance and error diſpelled—the bars of prejudice broken, and their ideas rendered juſt and clear, before they will be perſuaded to avoid the numerous and malignant evils incident to themſelves and families in their unconnected ſtate, or promote their peace, harmony, and happineſs.

May we not with equal juſtice and ſurpriſe enquire—why is not this done? Why have men been permitted ſo long to remain in error and ignorance reſpecting a matter in which they are ſo deeply intereſted? How is it that not even an attempt has hitherto been made to ſhow the nature and neceſſity of this Inſtitution? None ſo much the friend of ſociety as to convince men of its utility! Is it not almoſt unaccountable, that among the innumerable volumes written on every ſubject in which the information or intereſts of mankind are in the remoteſt degree concerned, that one, the moſt intereſting of all others to ſocial tranquillity, ſhould, to this hour, paſs unnoticed? Can it be that men have never ſeriouſly reflected on the neceſſity of ſuch an undertaking? Impoſſible:—Not ſee the neceſſity of preventing the ten thouſand evils which daily ſpring from this general ignorance and prejudice!—and which might by this means be removed. Where is the man ſo blind as not to ſee, or ſo depraved as not to lament, the melancholy conſequences of malice, revenge, murder, theft, ſeduction, calumny, and

diſgrace, with all thoſe inexpreſſible ills which ſad experience may convince us deſtroy the peace of every individual in a greater or leſs degree, the baneful influence of which is felt through every department of ſociety, and which extends the malignant poiſon to every family of whatever rank or degree? Surely great and urgent is the neceſſity of removing the cauſe of ſuch complicated evils; and which can only be effected by pointing out the one univerſal and infallible remedy for the entire, collective ills of life; that powerful antidote of force ſufficient to prevent, to counteract, to extirpate from ſociety the poiſonous *roots* of diverſified injuſtice;—an object which, through this means, is neither too diſtant for hope, nor too difficult for fortitude; but is at once rational and practicable to reſolution and perſeverance. The field on which we go, *ſelf-intereſt*, is as extended as human nature, and, when diveſted of prejudice, all degrees of reaſon muſt approve, and apply the eaſy remedy; for *ſelf-preſervation* will predominate in caſes where no higher principle will be attended to. To come now to the point—What is Freemaſonry?

The anſwer to this important query may be given in very few and ſimple terms: "An Inſtitution "eſtabliſhed for promoting the exerciſe of all the ſo-"cial and relative duties by the *only* effectual "means:" But ſome illuſtration will be expected.

I can ſcarcely flatter myſelf that every reader will believe me when I inform him, that the whole of this ſubject, which has made ſuch a noiſe in the world in every age and civilized nation, (yet as little underſtood as if invented yeſterday) is entirely comprehended in that golden rule of moral rectitude left by the Great Pattern of perfection to his followers: "Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye likewiſe ſo unto them." Here is every

thing in Freemaſonry—the plaineſt, ſimpleſt matter in the world; yet in which the various duties of general ſociety, as well as thoſe of every individual, are minutely and collectively comprehended.

The noble and extended idea expreſſed in theſe words is indeed worthy of their divine Author; and the *manner* in which it is here expreſſed is equally inimitable. Any elucidation which the diverſity of language will admit of, would only tend to obſcure this precept, and render it leſs beautiful and illuſtrious. It is ſo plain, that none can miſtake it's meaning, and yet ſo comprehenſive, that it extends to every caſe and to every perſon exiſting as a moral precept. It is a mirror in which every man may ſee his duty to another, in the moſt perplexed caſes, who wiſhes to ſee and practiſe it. In a word, this heavenly precept ſtrikes the reaſon and conſcience of man with ſuch irreſiſtible force, that, perhaps the perſon was never yet found hardy enough to *deny* it's dictates, however he might *deſpiſe* or neglect them.

But though the divine Author of thoſe words was the firſt and only perſon who ever expreſſed the ten thouſand duties of ſociety in a ſhort ſimple ſentence, yet the ſubſtance of this general precept has always been engraven on every man's heart, is inſeparable from his nature, and of a date as early as his creation. This univerſal ſenſe of right and wrong is expreſſed in our language by the term *conſcience*; and acting conſiſtent with it's dictates is called religion—it is alſo called FREEMASONRY.

Religion was the firſt, and, for a long time, the only law of mankind; and ſo long as it's precepts were attended to, there was no need for any other. But this was not a long time the caſe: The paſſions of men early began to operate in oppoſition to their religious reſtrictions to predominate over reaſon and

conſcience, and excite them to act in direct contradiction to the laws of Heaven.—The rewards and puniſhments of another world were objects too remote for the attention of blind and ungovernable paſſion.

Laws of another deſcription were early found wanting in order to deter men from thoſe ſpecies of evil which affected character, property, and even life.—This was found an indiſpenſable reſource; and which, by inflicting immediate puniſhment on offenders, in ſome meaſure anſwered the intended purpoſe;—indeed, were it not for the ſalutary influence of this excellent auxiliary, how wretched muſt have been the ſituation of mankind at every period ſubſequent to it's commencement!

Yet notwithſtanding the ſtrictures of morality—the mandates of religion, and protection of law; time and experience diſcovered that all theſe were not ſufficient. The properties, characters, and lives of men were ſtill ſported with by unreſtricted paſſion.—The laws of both heaven and earth were daily found as cobweb-fetters before the force of unbridled deſire.—The means were the beſt the wiſdom of man had yet been able to diſcover; but ſtill they were vaſtly inadequate to the end.

What candid and reflecting perſon cannot ſee this? Let any rational, unprejudiced man enquire—has religion (however excellent it's precepts) with all it's votaries, been found able to ſtem the torrents of vice and corruption? Have all the books ever yet written anſwered this end? Have the laws been found a ſufficient barrier againſt the wrongs of life?—Nay—has the entire united efficacy of philoſophy, morality, religion, and the laws, been found equal to the taſk? He muſt candidly anſwer—No: Crimes are at this day as frequently committed, and as ſerious in their conſequences, as at any preceding period. Robbery and murder, calumny and ſeduc-

tion, are ſtill the melancholy ſubjects of our daily experience. The effects of injuſtice may be ſeen in Bedlam. Priſons are at this day as throngly inhabited, and the times as much in favour of the hangman, as in the days of our great-grandfathers. Such is the ſecurity, and ſuch the improvement of ſociety! But to return:

The inſufficiency of both religion and law to ſuppreſs the moſt common and worſt of crimes, convinced men that ſome more effectual remedy was ſtill wanting; and induced them to exert all their wiſdom in order to diſcover it.—Such a noble and important purſuit, as it muſt meet with the approbation, ſo it was favoured with the aſſiſtance of heaven. A third remedy was diſcovered; and ſuch a remedy as amply compenſates for the deficiencies of the former two:—for, though evils, both numerous and melancholy, ſtill abound: the cauſe does not ariſe from the inſufficiency of the cure; but entirely from the *neglect* of it. All *may* apply it; and when they do, happineſs will be univerſal.

This ſovereign remedy has long been known by the term—*Free Maſonry*. This one thing is, unaſſiſted, able to effect what has in vain been attempted by every other means. As ſoon may men think to exhauſt the ocean by drops, as to deſtroy the complaints of mankind one of another, or the cauſes of thoſe complaints, in any other manner.—No:—This is the buſineſs of our glorious Inſtitution; and that *alone* can effect it. Let any inſtance be produced of one man doing an injury to another, and it will certainly be found that *both* were not MASONS—had this been the caſe, no ſuch inſtance could have happened.—This reſtores the *genuine* "Rights of Man," by deſtroying his *wrongs* without exception or reſerve. This unites the hearts, the intereſts and happineſs of men by ſuch ſtrong,

depending links, as have ever been proof againſt the moſt alluring temptations to injuſtice, in it's thouſand deceptious forms; and binds them by the moſt indiſſoluble ties of love and obligation to do unto every brother as they wiſh him to act with reſpect to them; as well as to avoid every thing they wiſh him to abſtain from.

This is FREEMASONRY:—the plaineſt and moſt rational thing that can be imagined—ſo much talked of and ſo much objected to, becauſe ſo little underſtood. This by no means conſiſts in the ſecret, diſtinguiſhing *marks* of MASONS:—theſe being only uſeful circumſtances, and prudential helps belonging to the Inſtitution, determined by the moſt intelligent men, and founded on the principles of reaſon and prudence, for the more effectual accompliſhment of the incomparable deſign:—but which differ from the thing itſelf as "ways and means" do from the end or object they are intended to accompliſh.

No longer then let that ſenſeleſs objection be heard—"If it be uſeful, why do you keep it a ſe-"cret?" MASONRY is no more a ſecret than is religion:—Maſonry is religion brought to perfection. So far as reſpects our preſent ſtate, they are only two names for the ſame thing.—They differ not in nature, but in name:—Not in eſſence, but in circumſtances. The one (MASONRY) is ſteady and invariable in the exerciſe of all the ſocial and moral duties; while the other, ſeparate from thoſe advantages which provide againſt the fluctuating nature of man, is, on that account, very precarious. To guard againſt, and counteract the inſtability of thoſe who know no other reſtraints than religion and law, is ſimply the intention of this Inſtitution, and it is fully adequate to the end.—So far as it has been applied, it has never been found to fail in one inſtance.

" In every nation a Maſon may find a friend, in " every climate he may find a home."

" This lays the rugged paths of nature even,
" And renders earth a temporary heaven."

I now call upon any man who can, to convict me of having exceeded the bounds of truth or prudence in what I have here advanced. I flatter myſelf I know how to diſtinguiſh between MASONRY and thoſe marks by which we diſcriminate betwixt a maſon and him who is not; and ſo long as I keep clear of the one, I know no obligation I am under to conceal the nature, deſign, and utility of the other—rather I regard myſelf under the higheſt obligation to make all the world, if poſſible, acquainted with it's excellent effects, that they may participate in it's inimitable privileges.

THE END.

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